

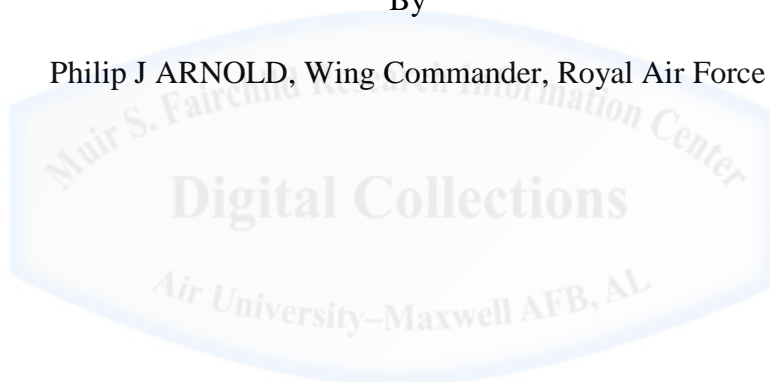
AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

The British Armed Forces Covenant -
Protection for Tommy or a Civil Military Battleground

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

April 2012

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	4
Section 1 - The History of the Armed Forces Covenant	4
Section 2 – Scope of the Armed Forces Covenant	6
Section 3 –The Effect of a Written Armed Forces Covenant	9
Section 4 – The Future for the Armed Forces Covenant	16
Conclusion	19



British Armed Forces Covenant: Tommy's Guardian or Politician's Scapegoat

Introduction

The Armed Forces Covenant has existed as an unwritten psychological contract between the UK government and her military for time immemorial. Following ten long years of war, the media had drawn attention to the poor conditions in some of those in the British military, both while deployed and back at home base. This eventually resulted in a legal, codified Armed Forces Covenant, when the Armed Forces Act passed into law in November 2011.

This paper examines whether a formal written Armed Forces Covenant will weaken the historically good relationship between Britain's military and her government and consequently not bring the promised material benefits to the rank and file. The paper asserts that while the process that brought the Armed Forces Covenant into being was damaging to British Civil Military Relations (CMR) in the short-term, that in the longer-term it provides a useful mechanism in which the civil military debate can take place, thus making it less likely that military leaders will resort to subjective, unprofessional means to defend their subordinates. The paper begins by detailing the genesis of the Armed Forces Covenant and how the State came to bear this obligation, followed by an outline of what is contained in the Armed Forces Covenant and how it achieved its current status. It then examines the impact the Armed Forces Covenant has had since it first gained public prominence in 2006, with particular reference to the influence of Gen Dannatt. Finally, the paper looks to the future now that the Armed Forces Covenant has become law.

Section 1 - The History of the Armed Forces Covenant

The concept of an obligation felt by a nation to her military is as old as time. An example of this obligation was captured in the notion of Noblesse Oblige, reflected in literature as early as

Homer's *Iliad*.¹ In Britain specifically, the obligation between soldier and state (in this case a Monarch) has also been enshrined for many generations. An early written example of this obligation is exemplified in the *Act for the Necessary Relief of Soldiers and Mariners*, which was passed by Queen Elizabeth 1 in 1593.² Over the ensuing centuries there have been other written examples, of what has become known as the Armed Forces Covenant; however, they are the exception that proves the rule. On the whole, the Armed Forces Covenant has remained an unwritten, moral obligation placed on the state by its duty to protect her military. This follows the British tradition of eschewing written constitutions in favor of tradition-based practice. Indeed, the UK does not have a written constitution per se, relying on a mix of tradition, case law, treaties and parliamentary conventions; this system has allowed the definition of the rights and responsibilities of both citizens and state to evolve with time.³ Interestingly, the first example of what would be recognized as a modern written Armed Forces Covenant is found in military doctrine. *Army Doctrine Publication Volume 5 (ADP5)* formally codified the meaning of the Armed Forces Covenant in 2000, defining that "mutual obligation forms the Armed Forces Covenant between the Nation, the Army and each individual soldier".⁴ This formal codification was intended to define the soldiers' duty as well as the support a soldier could expect from the Army and the Nation. However, it has allowed a hitherto relatively esoteric concept to be debated by lawyers, politicians and other stakeholders, both to further military related causes as well as other political agendas. One such stakeholder that is generally held to have the interests of the servicemen at heart is the Royal British Legion. The Royal British Legion is a charity that provides care, advice and support to serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families; it is comparable to the American Legion and is held in high regard by the British public. Its most visible activity is the organization of the Remembrance Day parades that occur

in every British town on 11 November each year. In 2006, the Royal British Legion became concerned that British troops were receiving insufficient support after returning from conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan and they began a campaign, using the Armed Forces Covenant, to highlight the shortfalls in the support given by government.⁵ When the Conservative Party was in opposition in 2008, its leader, David Cameron, seized upon the issue as a successful means to attack an unpopular government. Cameron launched a series of effective attacks against the government and promised to enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in law, if he were elected to Power in the General Election of 2010. Following his victory in that year, Cameron seemed far less keen to follow through with his promise to pass the Armed Forces Covenant into legislation. However, as a result of an intense media campaign, pressure from the Royal British Legion and other Forces charities, the Armed Forces Covenant was finally included in the wider Armed Forces Act, which received Royal Assent on 3 Nov 2011.⁶ So, after a long and bitter battle, the British Military has gained a legally enforced Armed Forces Covenant. This raises a question that perhaps should have been answered before this process began, is such a situation desirable? Before the paper addresses that question, it will detail what the Armed Forces Covenant actually covers, how it is enforced and who is responsible.

Section 2 – Scope of the Armed Forces Covenant

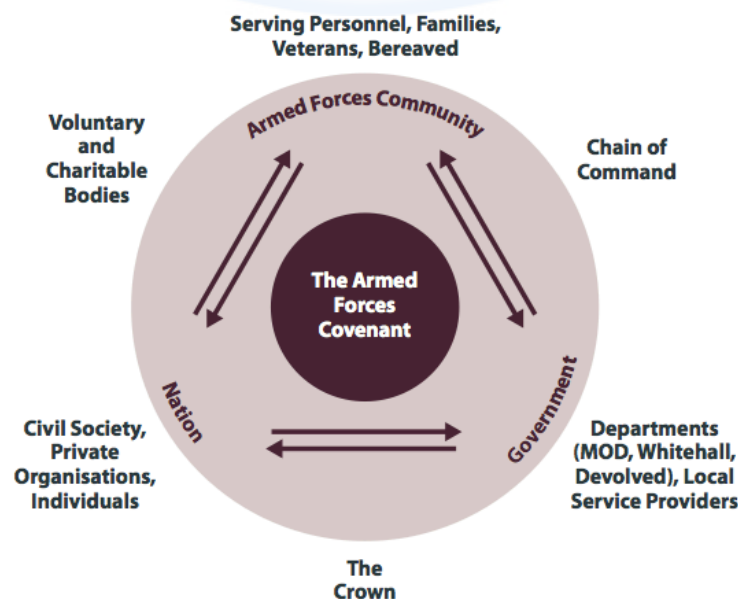
The Armed Forces Covenant has morphed considerably since its first written appearance in ADP5 in 2000. The doctrine was reissued in Nov 2010 and was described as the “capstone doctrine [that] drives our tactical doctrine and its practices, it also helps to explain what the Army is for ...”.⁷ The Army, as the lead service on the issue and speaking for all the Services, was quite clear what it believed the Armed Forces Covenant to be:

The nature of service is inherently unequal in that servicemen may have to contribute more than they receive. They may be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice in the

service of the Nation. In putting the needs of the Nation, their Service and others before their own, they forgo some of the rights and freedoms enjoyed by those outside. In return, British servicemen should be able to expect the Nation, and their commanders, to provide them with the means and ways to achieve the ends set, to treat them fairly, to value and respect them as individuals, to sustain and reward them and their families with appropriate terms of service, and to provide long-term support in the event of death, injury or poverty. This mutual obligation forms the Armed Forces Covenant between the Nation, the Service and each individual soldier, sailor, marine and airman and applies to all of the armed forces. It is a covenant, not a contract, so, in itself, it imposes moral rather than legally binding obligations. Unless Nation, Service and servicemen alike recognize and understand that it must be upheld come what may, it will fail. This is likely to cause goodwill and trust to be withdrawn.⁸

The doctrine focuses on the moral obligation rather than a legal one as it recognizes that without goodwill any Armed Forces Covenant is meaningless. The Armed Forces Covenant now covers 16 pages with the governments specific responsibilities covering a further 80 pages. This is a long way from the original simple statement of moral obligation. The covenant details relationships of responsibility between each of the key stakeholders in the process. This is demonstrated below in figure 1, taken from the Armed Forces Covenant.⁹

Figure 1.



This diagram shows that the Armed Forces Covenant covers the relationships between Government, Nation and Military. The subsidiary document “The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow” is specifically concerned with the relationship between Government and the Armed Forces, and provides much of the detail of the government’s obligation and the timeline against which the various elements must be achieved. The Armed Forces community includes: regular personnel, reservists, veterans, families and the bereaved; each of these groups will receive a level of support that reflects the needs of the individual and society’s level of moral obligation. The government’s obligations are split into 15 broad categories: terms and conditions of service; healthcare; education; housing; benefits and tax; responsibility of care; deployment; family life; commercial products and services; transition; support after service; recognition; participation as citizens, changes in defense and recourse.¹⁰ Examples of the specific obligations include a commitment to: honor the commitment and sacrifice of the armed forces community; strive to keep close links between the armed forces and the society they defend; ensure no disadvantage due to Service in the provision and continuity of public services and measure to minimize the social and economic impact of military life for those currently serving.¹¹

In isolation all of these aspirations look like a fair and desirable state of affairs; however, such a commitment by government will have second and third order effects that may not be immediately apparent. Nonetheless, the difficulty is that the obligation “the nation may feel towards our Armed Forces, as history relates, tends to wane when tales of heroism and sacrifice are less obviously in the media”¹². This adds weight to the argument in favour of legislation and is captured in the Armed Forces Act’s legal requirement to make an annual report to Parliament. It will ensure that the Armed Forces Covenant remains on the agenda and will act as a jolt to the

social conscience of those in power. Whether that reminder of consciences will provoke a patriotic response or the irritation will cause the opposite remains to be seen. Indeed, compelling an unwilling polity that is supported by an ambivalent public to honour its commitments may have undesirable consequences. The next section investigates the deeper impact of the Covenant and assesses its ultimate suitability.

Section 3 –The Effect of a Written Armed Forces Covenant

This section briefly examines the impact of the Armed Forces Covenant becoming law and whether this has been a good thing for both the UK military and the UK as a whole. First of all this paper investigates whether the Armed Forces Covenant meets its intended aim of holding politicians to account, or whether it falls short. By freezing in time the state's obligations to her servicemen, does the Armed Forces Covenant offer lawyers and politicians a means to meet the letter of the covenant, without having to meet its spirit? In turn, what is the effect of breaking the Armed Forces Covenant; do soldiers have the right to complain and, if so, does this give them unwelcome power? In its un-codified form, the Armed Forces Covenant allowed open debate as to whether the state had met its obligations; the mantle of defenders of military welfare was open to crusading journalists, pressure groups and charities. This has now subtly changed, since the military took part in the dialog that created the Armed Forces Covenant it tacitly gave its approval to the process and the subsequent result, thereby neutering those who would take up the cause of military welfare. By drawing a line in the sand, it has removed some of the scope for negotiation, informal influence and side-ways pressure that was available under a less formal arrangement. It defines battle lines and reduces the possibility of compromise. Consequently, this reduced operation space places senior military leaders in a position of greater temptation. When they feel that the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant has not been met, military leaders will

have to choose whether or not to speak out against their political masters, thus breaking the time-honoured tradition of objective control of the military. The alternative, to trust those same politicians to 'do the right thing', places a great deal of trust on the same politicians that were supposed to be held to account by this covenant, in which case the Armed Forces Covenant will have achieved little. Accordingly, the Armed Forces Covenant makes it more likely for the military to 'go public'.

This paper will now examine a case study of just such an occurrence, which occurred before the Armed Forces Covenant had passed into law during the tenure of General Sir Richard Dannatt the outspoken Chief of the General Staff¹³ (CGS). General Dannatt took command of the British Army in 2006 and courted controversy almost immediately. The controversial dialogue began in an interview with the British tabloid newspaper the Daily Mail. In that interview he attacked the British government on two counts. Firstly, that they had under-resourced the campaign in Iraq and secondly that they had broken the Military Covenant, where he "talks soberly of the 'military covenant' between a nation and its Armed Forces."¹⁴ 'I said to the Defence Secretary (Des Browne) that the Army won't let the nation down, but I don't want the nation to let the Army down'".¹⁵ From this point forward he spoke repeatedly and passionately in favour of the Military Covenant. Unfortunately, he also made government policy as he spoke; the government had specifically shied away from naming an exit-date from Iraq, yet, Dannatt called for an exit from Iraq within 2 years, a date that proved to be remarkably close to the eventual withdrawal. Dannatt even went so far as to have private dinners with opposition Conservative MPs where he again stated that the Afghanistan operation was under-resourced. This brought accusations from Government ministers that Dannatt had "crossed an important line, [and that] he is playing a high-risk game".¹⁶ While attempting to appear impartial, his

comments carried an undoubtedly biased political message. In the same article he said, “Twenty-nine per cent of government spending is on social security. Five per cent is on defence. Others can take a view on whether that proportion is right”.¹⁷ Comments such as those could have been drafted for him by the Conservative Party central office and were unprecedented in British Civil-Military relations. This pattern of behaviour continued during his tenure as CGS and the fact that the government did not fire him is more likely down to his tremendous popularity with both British servicemen and the British public rather than the appropriateness of his approach.¹⁸ This all occurred at a time the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, was tremendously unpopular. Due to a peculiarity in the British party-political system, Gordon Brown had not won a General Election, as he had inherited the party leadership when Tony Blair resigned, which was not a popular decision with much of the British electorate.¹⁹ Thus, the Military Covenant became a central feature of Dannatt’s attack on what he saw as an unpopular government that had failed to meet its obligation to the Army. It would not be too great a conjecture to suggest that he would have been happy to hasten a General Election, which, in his mind, would have been for the good of both the country and the British Army. This is all a very far cry from Huntington’s ideal of objective control of the military, a de-facto system that had served Britain well for centuries. So what had changed?

To address that question, this paper examines Civilian Military Relation (CMR) theory, to analyse whether what Dannatt had done was reasonable and what alternatives were open to him. Ellner states that the Armed Forces Covenant and Dannatt’s concurrent attack on the elected government were triggered by a unique set of circumstances and could not merely be explained away by insubordination. She stated that these “interventions” had to be viewed from three contexts, each of which had undergone tremendous change both in the short and longer-

term. Those contexts are “specific operations, defence spending and planning, and society’s attitudes towards government policy and the Armed Forces”. She further argued that when viewed within these contexts, Dannatt’s interventions had “disconnected the triangular relationship between, government policy, military requirements and self-perceptions, and society.”²⁰ The balance between these three elements is captured by Huntington in his seminal work “The Soldier and the State”, where he discusses the dynamic tension between two incompatible imperatives.²¹ The first, which he terms the ‘functional’ imperative, is the requirement to guarantee the security of the state. The second, the ‘societal imperative’ is derived from the demands placed on the military by the society from which it is drawn. Huntington’s solution to resolving this tension is for civilian primacy to be enacted through objective civilian control, as only autonomous military professionalism provides military capability while ensuring the neutrality of the military. Huntington acknowledges that objective control of the military, and its polar opposite subjective control, are ideal types, which can never be fully achieved.²² Feaver offers an alternative view to what he terms the ‘civil-military problematique’, believing that a well-defined line between military and the political spheres is neither desirable nor realistic.²³ This approach was further developed by Snider, when he stated that the military could not attain the objective ideal, as “modern militaries by their design and character are both bureaucracy and profession”.²⁴ This dual responsibility to both professional and bureaucratic institutions leads to dual and potentially incompatible demands on the senior officer. The importance of the decisions generated by the sorts of ‘wicked’ problems encountered in high-tempo operations could lead senior officers to air their concerns publicly. Snider accepted that these situations could occur and suggested a series of criteria that should be considered by the military professional before deciding upon public dissent. The five moral issues he names are: gravity of the issue; relevance

of the military leader's expertise; degree of sacrifice for the dissenter; timing of the act of dissent and congruency of the dissent with the dissenter's personality.²⁵ This paper uses these categories to address Dannatt's use of the Armed Forces Covenant and his public manipulation of the debate. Firstly, the gravity of the situation in 2006 could not have been greater, with the British Military engaged in 2 wars. Gen Dannatt's primary concern was the British Army and, in his assessment, they were overstretched and had been operating at surge capacity for over 3 years, with increasingly unachievable aims and limited resources, particularly in Iraq.²⁶ Secondly, his experience was without par; he was the most senior officer in the Army, a decorated infantryman, which was particularly pertinent because both the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were primarily infantry wars. Thirdly, the sacrifice required of Dannatt was high; he had earned the ire of the Labour government and probably expected to be fired for his actions. Matthew Paris of the [London] Times newspaper noted, "General Dannatt believed that his outburst would, and knew it should, cause Mr Blair to sack him; and [Dannatt] has the guts to go through with it. Whether Mr Blair has, we shall see".²⁷ Fourthly, the timing of the dissent was not of Gen Dannatt's making; he had taken over from Gen Jackson, who had been widely criticized for not speaking out more on behalf of his soldiers. The Iraq war was becoming more unpopular in Britain and was looking increasingly less winnable, as the historian Max Hasting stated in the Times "the British [Labour] Government has become increasingly cynical about its own war and has proved bitterly reluctant to commit the resources Dannatt wants".²⁸ This requirement for additional resources was exemplified by Dannatt's desire for British troops to train on the new equipment that they would operate once deployed to Afghanistan. This training would attract a cost of £1500 per man but was refused by the Treasury.²⁹ Therefore, if Dannatt were not to prove to be a repeat of Gen Jackson, he had to decide whether to speak out or whether to refuse the role

of CGS. History shows that he decided his duty lay at the head of the Army, for as long as the government would allow it. The final test, congruity, is more difficult to assess, as little evidence is available of any similar pattern of behavior. However, an indicator of long-standing moral courage may be read into his deep deliberations in 2002 about whether to resign from the Army to become ordained as a minister in the Anglican Church.³⁰ The lack of evidence may also suggest that this was not an abiding character flaw, rather that Dannatt took this stand because this was an issue he simply could not overlook. Given the brief assessment of the Snider's 5 factors, it seems that Gen Dannatt was the right man, doing the right thing, for the right reasons. This was underscored by his immense popularity with the public and military alike. However, this dissent came at a cost to the relationship between the Army and its political masters; history will be the judge of the cost-benefit analysis of Gen Dannatt's stand between 2006 and 2009. What is clear is that the personal relationship between Gen Dannatt and his immediate superior, Air Chief Marshall Sir Jock Stirrup and the relationship with the Labour Government had never been at a lower ebb.³¹ The effectiveness of Dannatt's strategy was examined closely by the other Service chiefs; the author, in his role as aide to a 2 star officer, sat in on numerous RAF Command Board meetings when the then Commander in Chief (CINC) of Air Command, Sir Clive Loader said he had considered "doing a Dannatt" but eventually decided that the popular support that would be curried from members of the RAF, as well as the British people, would be more than offset by the damage it would do to his relationship with his military and political masters, particularly at a time of intense budget scrutiny and program cuts.³² This experience is supported in Hasting's article in the Daily Mail, "Personal relationships between the chiefs of staff are worse than at any time in modern memory. The heads of the other two services keep

their mouths shut, because their foremost concerns are to sustain government support for their own equipment programmes”.³³

Ellner draws parallels to the similar debate that was raging in the USA, particularly with regard to Gen Shinseki's testimony to Congress in 2003, stating that “the dissent in the US and Britain thus showed a high degree of communality”.³⁴ However, the main difference between Shinseki and Dannatt was that Shinseki was giving testimony in a lawfully mandated session of Congress. It is true that he could have requested a closed session; either way, his presence and his testimony were required. On the other hand, Gen Dannatt made a conscious decision to circumvent the traditional role of advisor, albeit for the right reasons, to choose a direct approach to the British people via the media. It was, as Ellner puts it, “the juxtaposition is between a perfidious government and the trustworthy soldier”.³⁵ Though populist, Dannatt's stance was not without its opponents outside of government. Paris spotted the parallels with MacArthur and the dangers to the British way of government:³⁶

“There is a constitutional principle at stake, and it is fundamental. The Armed Forces are not in charge of government policy; ministers are democratically elected ministers. The Armed Forces are there to implement policy, not attack it. They can and must offer advice, of course, but the advice that Service chiefs offer ministers must be absolutely private. It is not their job to try to influence public debate by making statements to the news media.”

The title of the Paris article is telling, “I agree with every word Dannatt said. But he has got to be sacked”.³⁷ While the analysis above shows that Dannatt was justified in speaking out, at least by Snider's criteria, it has not been without cost. His actions have damaged the relations between government and military and have set the scene for a more political relationship between the two institutions in future. Indeed, Dannatt himself may have come to realize he took his political affiliation with the Conservative party too far; when he accepted the Life peerage from the

Conservative Party that had been denied him under the previous Labour Government he opted to sit on the as a crossbencher, rather than as a Conservative political peer.³⁸ However, using the old maxim ‘we are where we are’ it is now worthwhile addressing the future. How CMR will develop in view of the legal codification of the Armed Forces Covenant and Gen Dannatt’s politicization of the issues is addressed in the next section.

Section 4 – The Future for the Armed Forces Covenant

While the Armed Forces Covenant has provided a snapshot of the government’s obligations to the military, it will inevitably become a dynamic and living document, both through design and through inevitable pragmatism. The designed element will be provided by the annual report to parliament and will provide an opportunity to scrutinize the government’s accomplishments against its stated aims, which can be no bad thing. However, the Armed Forces Covenant will also provide a framework in which a pragmatic debate can take place over whether the government of the day is meeting the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant as well as the letter of the law. It is this second and potentially more powerful area in which real progress can be made. Regarding the specified and codified element of the government’s obligations, the initial concern was that simply capturing the requirements would somehow bound the government’s responsibilities and allow a litigious government to avoid its responsibilities by using semantics and sophistry to reframe the debate. Without the second intangible element this may in time become an issue but in the 3 years since Gen Dannatt’s retirement and in the 6 months since the Armed Forces Covenant became law this has not been the case. Indeed as French and Boyer put it, “Interestingly, the genius of this document might lie in the fact that it has been political parties, the media, and those outside (or recently retired [from]) the Armed Forces who have been most protective of the Covenant and most sensitive to breeches of it”.³⁹ The fact that a

debate exists, and is likely to continue, over the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant gives the best hope for the future of CMR. The Civil Military arena is a dynamic one; personalities change, as does the operational environment and without an on-going and informed debate the Armed Forces Covenant could simply become an obsolete checklist. That the results of this debate can be captured in a form that can be used to hold the government to account (the annual report to Parliament) is useful but only if the advocates in favour of the military continue to come from outside the military itself. This role is highlighted in the Armed Forces Covenant and the key stakeholders throughout the process have been gathered into a body called the 'External Members of the Covenant Reference Group'; they provide an informed and yet impartial and civilian body that can act as an advocate for the military and their families.⁴⁰ This body, combined with a willing and free press, should abrogate the conditions that forced Gen Dannatt to take the stance he did. While these structures and processes provide as comprehensive as possible safeguard against either overegged demands from the military or from a government that is not meeting its obligations, it is inevitable that at some stage there will be some form of transgression, by one side or the other. This will provide the hardest test for the Armed Forces Covenant; however, ultimately, the final arbiter of what is reasonable will be the British people. If the requirements identified by the Covenant Reference Group are unreasonable or require a solution that the government deems unaffordable, it will attract debate in the media and ultimately the ballot box. The British public's generosity is not unlimited; despite a popular and successful campaign by Gen Dannatt "this did not translate into greater public acceptance of higher defence spending".⁴¹ Therefore, the requests made by the Covenant Reference Group will have to be reasonable and resonant if they are to draw public support, particularly if that support comes with a price tag. Be that as it may, a more likely scenario is that of the government

playing politics with its commitments and even more likely, its refusal to add obligations to the Armed Forces Covenant as they arise with the passage of time. As Rousseau notes, individuals that perceive their “psychological contract has been violated feel let down and betrayed ... [this] can lead the individuals involved to experience mistrust and a loss of a particular relationship” ; this goes, in part, to explain the high emotion that existed during Dannatt's tenure and why it is particularly important to address this issue.⁴² The Armed Forces Covenant has recognised the importance of the issue and has set in place a structure whereby issues can be resolved. It notes that:⁴³

“Members of the Armed Forces Community should have means of recourse open to them, if they believe that they are not being treated in a fair and appropriate way. Established routes of recourse such as complaints processes or Ombudsmen should be sensitive to the particular circumstances of the Armed Forces Community. In addition, for serving personnel and those who have recently left service, there should be a responsive system for handling complaints relating to their service in the Armed Forces, overseen by the Service Complaints Commissioner.”

The Interim Report then amplifies this means of recourse to detail the new post of “Service Complaints Commissioner”. This civilian post is to “provide a rigorous and independent oversight of how the complaints system is working and to report back to Ministers and to Parliament”.⁴⁴ The MOD has also undertaken to familiarize servicemen with the role of this ombudsman as it recognizes that the existence, let alone the role, of this post is poorly understood. If all these measures fail, then the recourse of ‘doing a Dannatt’ remains open to the senior military leader but he needs to ensure that Snider’s 5 criteria are met before speaking out and that he is willing to take the consequences of such a high-profile act. As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan draw to a close, public sympathy for the military will inevitably wane. Given the existence of the Armed Forces Covenant, the threshold for acceptance of any public dissent by senior military officers will be very high and the issue will have to be more fundamental than

simple inter-service turf battles over funding. The Armed Forces Covenant does not make mercenaries of our Servicemen nor does it seek to give them a written contract detailing extensive terms and conditions. What it does provide is recognition of the unique nature of military service and the hazards attached; it enshrines in law the age old commitment from the nation so that serviceman will not be disadvantaged as a result of their service. In this way it has held true to the original intent laid down in ADP5.

Conclusion

That there has been short-term gain as a result of Gen Dannatt's actions during his tenure as CGS is undoubted. The living conditions of servicemen have received unprecedented attention, which culminated in the acceptance of the terms of the Armed Forces Covenant into law. That this overt hostility to the government has had a detrimental effect on the CMR is also certain, though that short, sharp shock allowed a more mature debate to take place, which has resulted in a better, systemic way of resolving disputes. Gen Dannatt's actions certainly cleared the way for his successor Gen Richards. The real test of the long-term impact of the Armed Forces Covenant will be seen when the checklist gets close to completion. The government's real commitment will be seen when new issues arise in a post-Afghanistan context. The public's focus is likely to return to domestic issues such as the economy and CMR will return to its previous intangible and informal state. Whether new issues are added to the Armed Forces Covenant action list or whether they simply fill column inches in military journals, the relationship will effectively return to a pre-covenant era. The lasting effect of Gen Dannatt's action may be that a government may be a little more wary of ignoring genuine military concerns regarding the welfare of its personnel, as they will not wish a rerun of the Labour governments experience on 2006 – 2009. As long as the Covenant Reference Group are sensitive to the public mood, they should provide

a balance that enables a return to a Huntington style of object control that has served the United Kingdom so well, for so long.



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Notes:

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- ² House of Commons Library, Standard Note - *Armed Forces Covenant*. 9 Jun 2011. Claire Taylor. International Affairs and Defence Section. Accessed 15 Mar 2012. www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05979.pdf
- ³ Barnett, H. (2005). *Constitutional and Administrative Law* (5 ed.). London: Cavendish. p. 9. "A written constitution is one contained within a single document or a [finite] series of documents, with or without amendments"
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- ¹³ Head of the British Army
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- ³² Sqn Ldr Arnold, acting as Personal Staff Officer to Air Vice Marshall Routledge Chief of Staff for Policy, Plans and Strategy, attended RAF Command Board Meeting from Jun 2009 to Jun 2010. The RAF Command Board, chaired by the CINC, was the RAF 2 and 3 star steering committee for all RAF operational issues.
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